

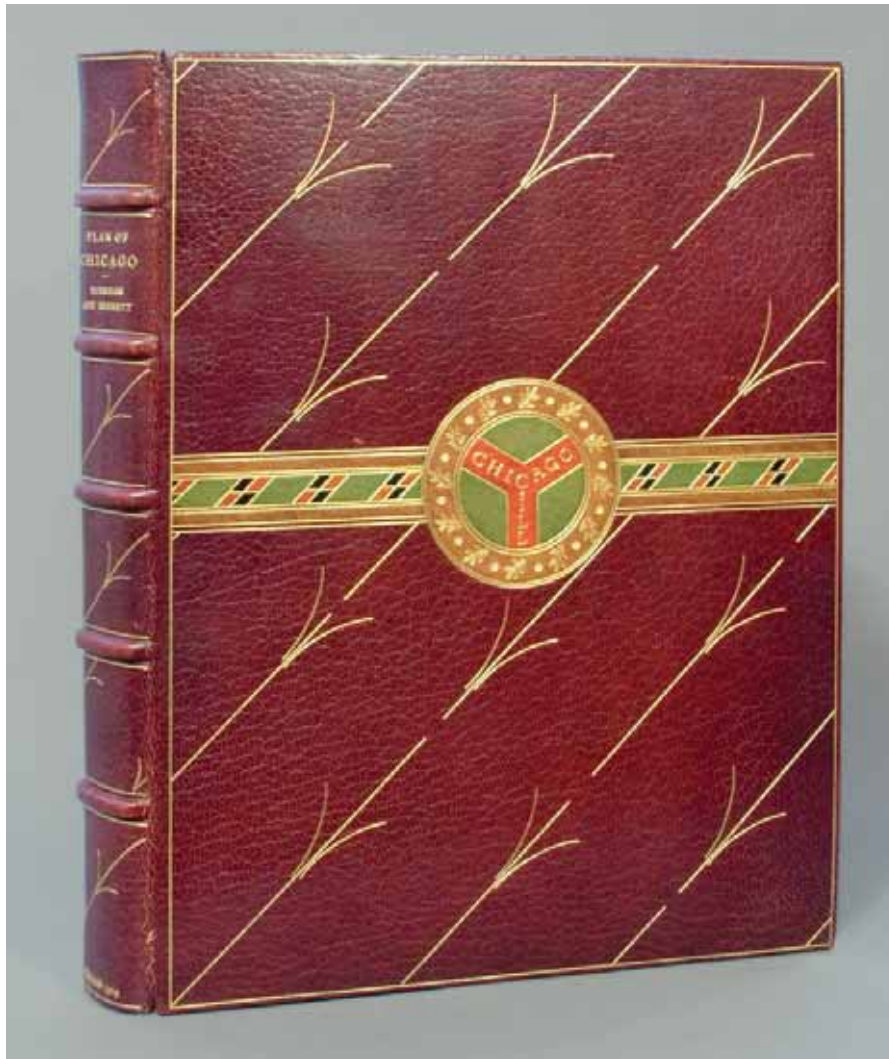
## R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company

Its Role in the Development of Commerce, Craft, and Culture in Chicago

Kim Coventry

The impetus for this article is an exhibition at the University of Chicago entitled *Printing for the Modern Age: Commerce, Craft, and Culture in the R.R. Donnelley Archive*, which runs through February 12, 2007, in Regenstein Library. The exhibition honors the recent gift of the archive by R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company to the university and is accompanied by a catalog in which the scope of the collection and nature of the materials are highlighted. Below we will examine some of the underpinnings in the first decades of the 20th century that led to R.R. Donnelley's rise to prominence as the nation's largest, and arguably, most important commercial printing firm. R.R. Donnelley's story,

however, must be viewed in tandem with the history of Chicago, as the economic and cultural reputations of both are inextricably linked. This relationship can be best understood by looking at specific examples of R.R. Donnelley's early initiatives within the context of its early Chicago clients and the



*This copy of The Plan of Chicago is emblematic of the company's position in Chicago. T. E. Donnelley was instrumental in the movement which led to its writing; Donnelley printed it in 1909; and the Donnelley hand bindery gave it this lavish leather cover in 1927.*

products printed for them.

In the last half of the twentieth century, at least one Donnelley-printed product was likely to have been in every North American household. The telephone book is the most obvious example, but it could also have been a Bible, magazine, Sears or

Montgomery Ward catalog, textbook, novel, or set of the Britannica or World Book encyclopedia. The path from small printer/publisher to one of national prominence began in 1864 when Richard Robert Donnelley, the founder of the company that would bear his name, arrived in Chicago. A native of Canada, Donnelley was drawn to the city because of its reputation as a printing center and its potential for growth in this area. By the time of the Civil War, Chicago boasted twenty-nine printing firms, whose operations had spurred the development of type foundries, engravers, bookstores, and a vibrant community of indigenous writers.

In 1870, Donnelley, who had been through a number of publishing and printing partnerships, restructured his business as the Lakeside Publishing and Printing Company and commis-

sioned a six-story building at the corner of Clark and Adams Streets designed by architect Cass Chapman. By the autumn of 1871, four of the building's six stories were complete and several presses had been installed when the great Chicago Fire swept  
*See R.R. DONNELLEY, page 2*



# CAXTONIAN

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*This stereoscope slide documents the ruins of the Lakeside Building in 1871.*

R.R. DONNELLEY, from page 1

through the city and destroyed the bustling business district. An unattributed manuscript in the company archive that appears to have been written in the early 1930s records the event: "At that time, Mr. Donnelley resided [at 664] North La Salle Street near Lincoln Park. About two o'clock on that eventful Monday morning the glare of the conflagration aroused him, and he hastened to stay the torment of the fire before it swept away the pride of his heart... But he was only in time to see the labor of so many months melt away in a moment."<sup>1</sup> Among the 18,000 businesses in ruins was his Lakeside Building.

Within days of the fire, which also destroyed his home, Donnelley boarded a train to New York to secure new presses and the other tools of his craft. While his partners, Edward Goodman and Reverend Leroy Church, withdrew from the business, Donnelley pressed ahead, rebuilding during the most dynamic period of growth for Chicago and one of the most remarkable for any American city. Donnelley re-established his business in temporary quarters at 103-107 Canal while the structure at Clark and Adams was rebuilt; in June 1873, he was in full operation. Twenty years later, one publication commented on the beauty of this building and on its importance to the development of printing and publishing in Chicago: "The Lakeside Building is of the days when Chicago imitated Paris, with pavilions, Mansards, gables, and dormers. Its exterior is of stone and iron, and it has 6 stories... It has 65 offices, 3 stores, 2 ele-

vators carrying 1,600 passengers daily, and its 300 occupants are publishers, printers, and manufacturers' agents. It has always been a publishing center, and here the earliest literary magazines were edited, particularly the *Lakeside Monthly*."<sup>2</sup>

Despite these accomplishments, the company was walking a financial tightrope, due, in large part, to an industry-wide depression. In 1889, Donnelley wrote to his second son, Thomas Elliott (T. E.): "A couple of days after my return Clark, Longley & Co., one of our largest printing concerns, failed badly. It has sent a shiver through all our lines of trade. Shaken the very slight confidence money-handling people had in us and made our work still harder." Bankruptcy in 1890 forced Donnelley to reorganize, this time as R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company. On the board were Donnelley, president; his eldest son, Reuben H., vice president; T. E., treasurer; and longtime employee F. E. Moore, secretary.

Despite financial struggles, Donnelley felt optimistic about his new corporation. Chicago, after all, continued to grow (the population had increased from just under 370,000 in 1870 to just under 1,400,000 in 1900) and now teemed with self-made millionaires. It boasted libraries, museums, and universities, created to echo the achievements and pride of its builders.

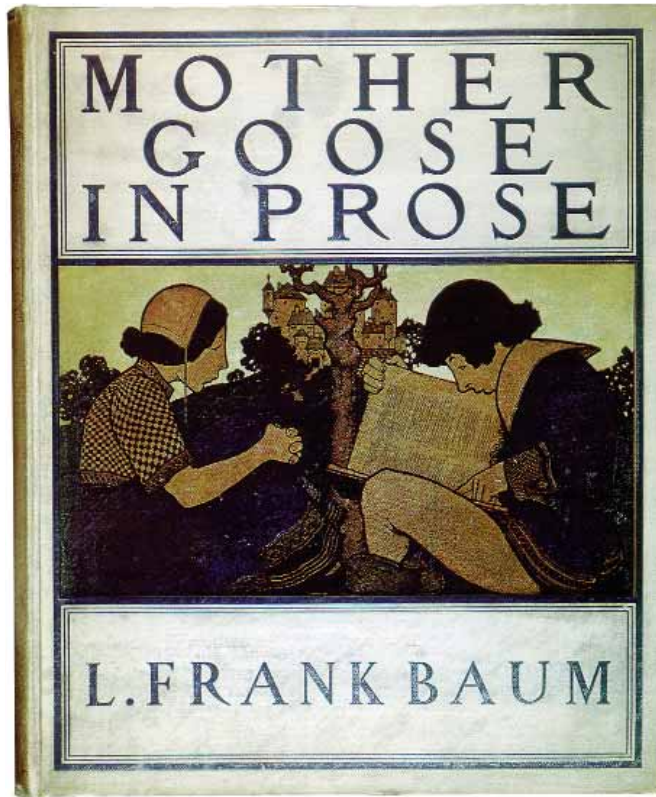
There was additional impetus for printers at the time: the birth of an authentic Chicago literary tradition. This movement was advanced through the efforts of strong organizations

focused on the book arts and literature: the Chicago Literary Club, founded in 1874; the Little Room literary circle, 1892; the Duodecimo Club, 1893; the Caxton Club, 1895; and the Cliff Dwellers, 1909. T. E. was a member of the Literary Club, the Cliff Dwellers, and the Caxton Club (see sidebar, page 10), and the family company printed books, directories, and ephemera for each of them.

Quite naturally, novelists and poets found a home in Chicago, regarded by many writers as a powerful metaphor for the United States' ambitious future. As capitalists flocked to the city, so did writers such as Francis Fisher Browne, Eugene Field, Henry Blake Fuller, Hamlin Garland, Robert Herrick, De Witt Miller, Lucy and Harriet Monroe, Anna Morgan, and Francis Wilson, among others associated with the growing literary awakening.

In response, local publishing houses (some of them booksellers-turned-publishers) began to supply the market with trade books that heretofore had not been produced in Chicago. Donnelley presses printed important titles for Chicago publishers Fleming H. Revell Company, A. C. McClurg & Company, Scott, Foresman and Company, Way & Williams, S. C. Griggs & Company, Stone & Kimball, the University of Chicago, and others. In addition to Garland, the list of authors included George Ade, Kate Chopin, Hobart Chatfield-Taylor, Henry James, and George Bernard Shaw.

The company's relationship with Stone & Kimball was unique. Proprietors Herbert Stuart Stone and Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, Jr. moved to Chicago after graduating from Harvard, with the goal of publishing simple, well-designed, carefully edited books at reasonable prices. In 1895, Donnelley printed eleven titles for Stone & Kimball; in 1896, it printed sixteen more. By 1906, Donnelley had produced a total of 154 books for the publishing house. The



*Mother Goose in Prose (Way and Williams, 1897) and Phyllis in Bohemia (Stone, 1897) both printed by Donnelley.*



William Rainey Harper, who had arrived in Chicago in 1891 to head the newly founded University of Chicago. One of Harper's early goals was to establish a university press, and he turned to Donnelley for help. The printer's efforts are documented in an unpublished manuscript (1958) by H. P. Zimmerman, a longtime Donnelley executive: "During the nineties, and for some six or eight years thereafter, there were practically no press facilities [at the University of Chicago] and the presswork was substantially all done by Donnelleys [sic]. The type came to us wrapped singly page-by-page, we would do the lockup and presswork and deliver the sheets to our bindery for saddle stitched booklets... and to a trade binder... [Donnelley installed its first case bindery in 1901] when sewing and/or case binding was required." The arrangement with the University of Chicago lasted until the press secured its own equipment.

After Richard Robert Donnelley's death in 1899, T. E. assumed the presidency of the family company. Armed with a degree from Yale, contacts on the East Coast, a commitment to quality, and an inherent knack for salesmanship, he had the vision and the skill to lead R.R. Donnelley into the new century.

It was an important moment for Chicago as well. The city had pioneered the mail-order industry, on its way to becoming a

See R.R. DONNELLEY, page 4

popularity of these volumes necessitated many reprints and, as Gaylord Donnelley noted many years later, it was a godsend for Donnelley: "Our relationship with Stone & Kimball was so good that our production people could call up that firm... whose watermarked papers we kept on hand, and say we needed some printing."

With local authors, publishers, and printers (in 1894, 243 titles were published by 53 local firms, establishing Chicago as second only to New York) working toward the same goal, Chicago became, albeit for a short-lived period, a book-publishing center with a national reputation. The Chicago printing industry expanded dramatically in this period. Not only was Chicago home to printing-press manufacturers (including Miehle, 1890, and Goss, 1885), but it had nearly 400 printing companies; R.R. Donnelley was the largest, with nearly 500 employees.

Despite the rigorous demands of his business life, the senior Donnelley was involved in civic and cultural affairs that distinguished and advanced the reputation of the city. Of particular note was his relationship with a young Yale professor named



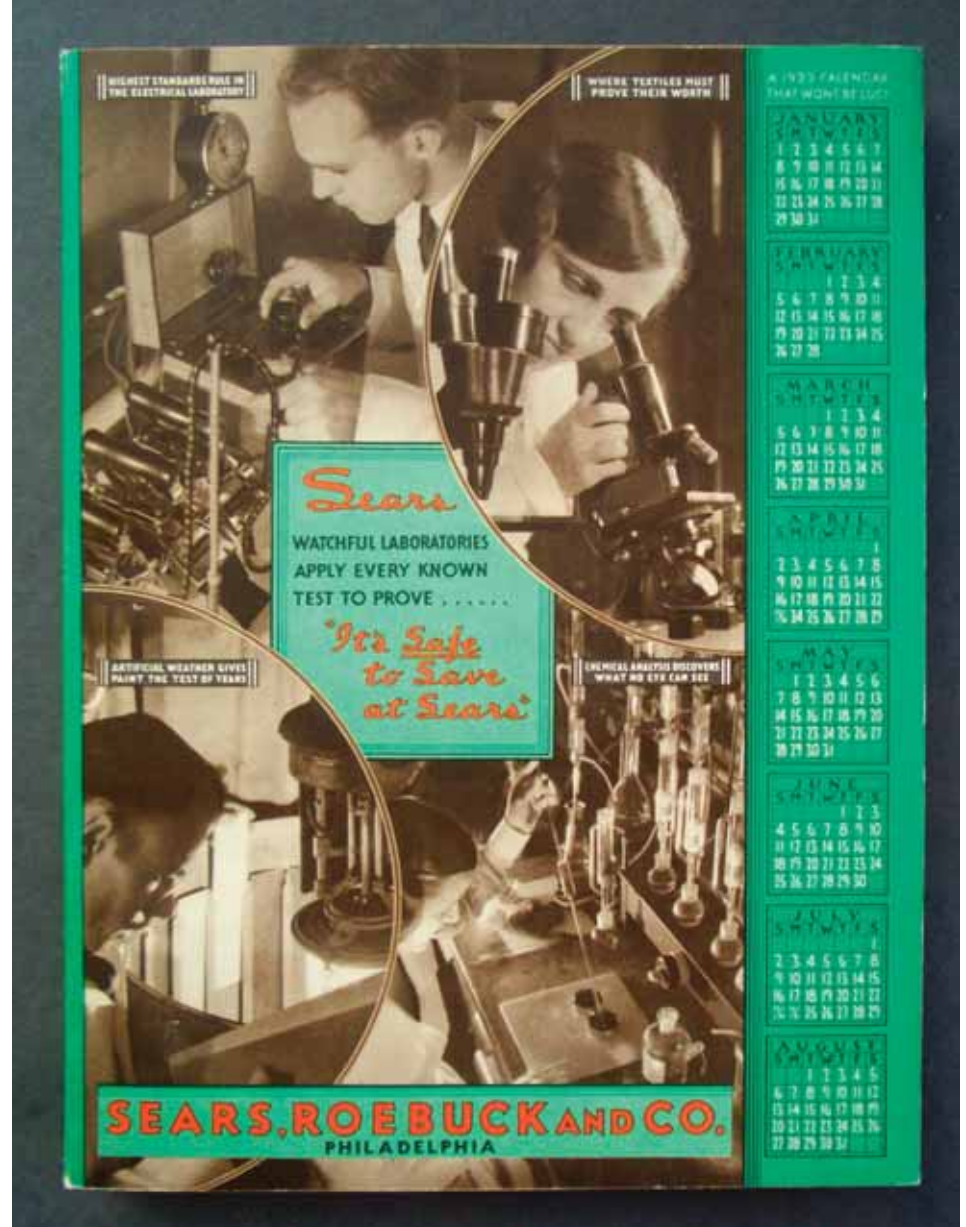
T. E. Donnelley

R.R. DONNELLEY, from page 3

major factor in the American economy. R.R. Donnelley was now large enough to jump into the competition vying for this business. Donnelley had had steady work printing catalogs and fashion booklets for many of the stores on State Street. Orders from Chas. A Stevens & Company and Mandel Brothers varied from season to season to between three and six hundred thousand copies. For the two largest State Street retailers, Carson Pirie Scott & Company, and Marshall Field & Company, Donnelley printed a variety of quality publications and magazines that revealed Chicago's sophistication.

But the biggest and most high-profile job at the time was the annual mail-order catalog of Montgomery Ward & Company. Donnelley began printing occasional stand-alone pieces and parts of the Ward catalog in the early 1890s. Later in the decade, the company invested in two pieces of equipment that streamlined production of the Ward catalog: a Lovell Perfect Binder (which reduced the weight of the catalogs by trimming more from the binding edge, thus saving on postage costs) and a rotary perfecter press with folding delivery.

R.R. Donnelley and Ward reached an agreement at the end of the decade for the printer to do the composition, printing, and binding of the retailer's general catalog from 1896 to 1908 (as a measure of the scale of this job, in 1897 the catalog was one thousand pages long). There was a hiatus in work for Ward until 1916, when Donnelley did odd jobs for the company. In the next



A Sears catalog from 1933.

year, Donnelley negotiated a contract with Ward to take effect on January 1, 1919, but it was quickly rendered obsolete when the U.S. entered World War I and Goss Printing Press Company informed Donnelley that it could not deliver more than six of the thirteen new ninety-six-page rotary presses required to meet the specifications of the new Ward contract. Thus, W. F. Hall continued to manufacture the catalog for one year after the war. In 1920, a new contract was negotiated granting Donnelley 60% of Ward's general catalogs and special-sale books.

Obtaining work from Sears, Roebuck & Company proved to be more difficult, with Donnelley getting spot jobs and pieces of the general catalog for many years while the John F. Cuneo Company, also in Chicago, had the coveted catalog contract. But with quality and honesty on its side, Donnelley

earned the first significantly large contract with Sears in 1912 for the complete printing and binding of the Dallas edition of the general catalog. It was a run of between four and five hundred thousand copies. In 1928, as the Sears contract with Cuneo neared expiration, Sears decided to turn the composition over to W. F. Hall and the printing over to R.R. Donnelley (Donnelley compositors were handling the Ward catalog, and Sears feared that the two jobs would be mixed up). Hall's price for the composition was high, and Donnelley quickly sold the retailer on its method of fixing the price of service before any actual work was begun (the company called it "predetermined costs").

General Robert E. Wood, then president of Sears, was skeptical about the new pricing method and required Donnelley to file with the Northern Trust Company a



Interior spread from Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago, 1909.

complete tabular statement that described the system. The savings were so great—in the neighborhood of \$250,000 on alterations alone—that the filing was never consulted. Satisfied that he was getting a good deal, Wood signed a contract with Donnelley for the printing and composition of the Sears catalog in 1928.<sup>3</sup>

In 1909, R.R. Donnelley produced one of the most glamorous printing jobs Chicago had ever seen, one that would also become among the most important documents in the city's history. The *Plan of Chicago*, the work of architect Daniel Burnham and his partner Edward H. Bennett, was a revolutionary urban design that outlined the development of a system of lakefront parks, beaches, yacht harbors, and piers. Part of the concept was a string of recreational offshore islands, a device to bring the city into the lake and vice versa. A boulevard was envisioned to connect the north and south sides of the river. That boulevard is today's Michigan Avenue.

The plan was published by the Commercial Club of Chicago, of which T. E. had

been a longstanding member. Burnham met with him and said: "I want this book to be in the best taste of today and at the same time [be] in a style that would have been good 50 years ago and will be good 50 years from now."

By all measures, the plan and book constituted a triumph: a beautifully composed document with stunning color illustrations by artist Jules Guerin. On the practical side, the volume promoted the development of a new Chicago lakefront, which in many important ways was realized in the next decade. And when the first edition of 1,650 copies was released, it had national distribution and set into motion an urban-planning movement throughout the country. By 1920, plans along the lines of Burnham's masterwork had been produced for many large U.S. cities, most of them illustrated and printed as lavishly as possible. The plan brought international recognition to Chicago.

Another milestone for Donnelley and for Chicago came in 1910, when the company was awarded a contract to print the first

American edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This was the largest composition, engraving, and plate-making job Donnelley had ever handled, and it propelled the company to the forefront of North American book production. For the first four printings of the 11th edition, many volumes were produced by a variety of printers, but by the fifth printing, Donnelley's presses were able to produce all 29 volumes.

T. E. Donnelley's goals, however, were not just about volume. Early in his tenure as company president, he undertook three important initiatives that brought top-level talent to Chicago. The first was to develop a training program that would ensure him of a loyal group of employees and quality workmanship. His experience with labor unions that, at the turn of the century, brought a halt to his presses no doubt had impacted his decision to found the School for Apprentices in 1908. Based on a European model, the school admitted boys with a grammar-school diploma and "special

See R.R. DONNELLEY, page 6

*These very young boys were actually pre-apprentices in the School for Apprentices program, circa 1909. The gray tones are from retouching done to the print prior to use in a company brochure.*



R.R. DONNELLEY, from page 5

promise and ability.” Students followed a rigorous, seven-year course consisting of standard fields of learning and craftsmanship, divided equally between classroom and factory. In addition to mathematics, English, design, arts, science, civics, reading, and language, apprentices were introduced to proofreading, typesetting, pressmanship, engraving, and binding. This was followed by a five-year apprenticeship comprising full-time factory work under master craftsmen. Early apprentices received \$5 per week (pre-apprentices started at \$2.40 a week) and most of the benefits of regular employment, as well as two weeks of paid vacation.

T. E.’s second initiative, the establishment of a hand bindery, reinforced the goal of quality at R.R. Donnelley. His notion was that the old-world craftsmanship of a hand bindery would influence quality throughout the plant. To head up this new department, he turned to English bookbinder Douglass Cockerell, who in turn recommended Alfred de Sauty, of the Central School of

Arts and Crafts in London. Shortly after he arrived in Chicago in 1922, De Sauty hired three European-trained bookbinders: William Anson, Basil Cronk, and Leonard Mounteney (who left Donnelley in 1926 to start a hand bindery at John F. Cuneo). The operation became known across the country for its one-of-a-kind leather bindings (and later for its pioneering work in the area of conservation). Its immediate impact on the commercial end of the business is seen in the choice of materials and in the sturdy and handsome bindings on everything that came off Donnelley’s binding lines from short-run limited editions to encyclopedias.

The third, and perhaps the most significant, change that T. E. Donnelley made was to hire William A. Kittredge to organize a department of graphic design. Kittredge was an experienced designer, having worked for the Riverside Press in Cambridge, the Oxford Press in Boston, the Oswald Press in New York, and the Franklin Printing Company in Philadelphia.

When he arrived in 1922, Kittredge was given extraordinary free rein (and a considerable budget) to elevate Donnelley’s reputation in the graphic arts. The over-sized, ten-page booklet Kittredge designed to announce his appointment set the tone, as did the modernist furniture with which he furnished his office; the modern era had arrived at R.R. Donnelley, and Kittredge would lead the way.

Kittredge immediately set to work on a series of lavish advertising booklets touting the company’s services and demonstrating its craftsmanship and design capabilities. He also commissioned some of the country’s most noted illustrators, typographers, and calligraphers—including John Averill, Richard Fayerweather Babcock, Harry Cimino, W. A. Dwiggins, Rockwell Kent, Ervine Metzler, Bruce Rogers, Rudolph Ruzicka, Edward A. Wilson, and others—to collaborate on promotional pieces for the company and for outside clients when time allowed. In this way, Donnelley opened the field of graphics arts to the larger commu-



*The office of William Kittredge in the Calumet Plant. Its furnishings represented the fact that the modern era had arrived at R.R. Donnelley.*

nity, so that talent and fresh ideas were coming to Chicago, creating an unprecedented and vibrant artistic climate.

Not all of Kittredge's work was glamorous; in fact, most was not. But he applied high standards equally to telephone directories, dictionaries, trade books, in-house advertising, and limited editions. One designer reported that, through carefully constructed presentations in which he sold concepts to clients, Kittredge was able to convince publishers to make changes in the design and typography of their products.

Kittredge influenced changes to monumental works such as multivolume encyclopedias, all while designing award-winning, limited-edition books. By the time he died in 1945, he had become one of the most influential graphic designers in the United States and had placed Donnelley at the forefront of commercial graphic arts. In fact, between 1922 and 1935 Donnelley designed and manufactured, in whole or in part, 38 titles on the coveted American Institute of Graphic Arts' Fifty Books of the year list. These include five titles for the Caxton Club, and one each for the American Library Association, Art Institute of Chicago, Book Club of Texas, Newberry Library, Rowfant Club, and University of Chicago.

R.R. Donnelley supported quality graphic design and craftsmanship in practice and by example. With the founding of the School for Apprentices in 1908, the company began to amass a library of bound and unbound samples of the work of the leading printers and type designers throughout history. Older examples were purchased from bookstores and at auction, while newer examples were solicited from presses and publishing houses around the world. These materials served as a form of education by example and they brought the larger world of graphic design to Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

In 1930, the company became a public promoter of the graphics arts when it opened galleries in its flagship plant at 22nd Street and Calumet Avenue. There it launched an exhibition program which matched in quality (and press coverage) that of some of the city's leading museums and galleries. In its first year, the Lakeside Press Galleries, located on the eighth floor of the south-facing "D" wing of the building, organized and presented exhibitions on American and English woodblock prints, European posters, aeronautical prints, and contemporary American book illustration. In the second year, the exhibition scope became international with a show on Czechoslovakian printing (1931). Between

1930 and 1961, R.R. Donnelley organized more than 130 exhibitions. Some were accompanied by catalogs with essays by leading scholars: art critic Thomas Craven on John Steuart Curry; Newberry Library John M. Wing Collection custodian Ernst F. Dettner on the history of the title page; calligrapher James Hayes on the Roman letter forms; and printer to Yale Carl Rollins on American type designers.

The materials for exhibitions were borrowed from an international group of museums and private collectors: color aquatints owned by Mrs. James Ward Thorne; flower and fruit prints from the holdings of Gordon Dunthorne; early Chicagoana amassed by Joseph T. Ryerson; French and English illustrated books from the collection of Lake Forest resident Alfred E. Hamill; and prints from the collection of Lessing Rosenwald, to name only a few.

Other displays focused on printing technology: for example, commercial bookbinding, halftone engraving, direct-color photo reproduction, intaglio printing, and offset lithography. Exhibitions were also devoted to leading artists such as Thomas Hart Benton (1937), John Steuart Curry (1939), and to themes such as American photography (1942), and American type designers (1948).

These exhibitions, no doubt, were a form of promotion, but in a broader sense, they served as a vehicle for rich fermentation and dialogue on all things graphic. Donnelley, whether aware of it or not, was an agent of cultural exchange that enriched the availability of the graphics arts in Chicago and likewise brought recognition in this area to the city.

It goes without saying that for the better part of the twentieth century, R.R. Donnelley's focus was building a large and reputable company. What is unique is that the manner in which it pursued its goals placed it in a position to effect and contribute to the development of commerce, craft, and culture in Chicago and beyond.

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Photographs by Kim Coventry and Robert McCamant.*

*See NOTES TO DONNELLEY, page 10*

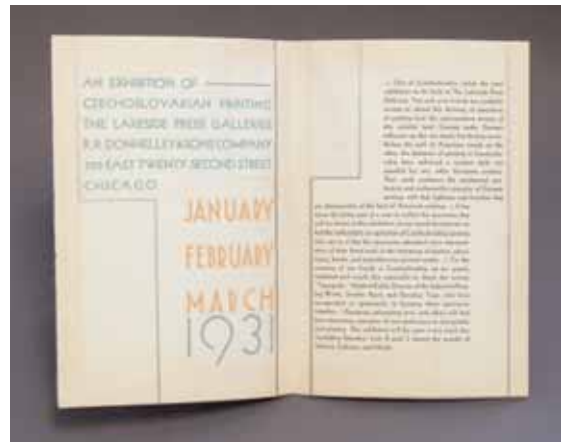
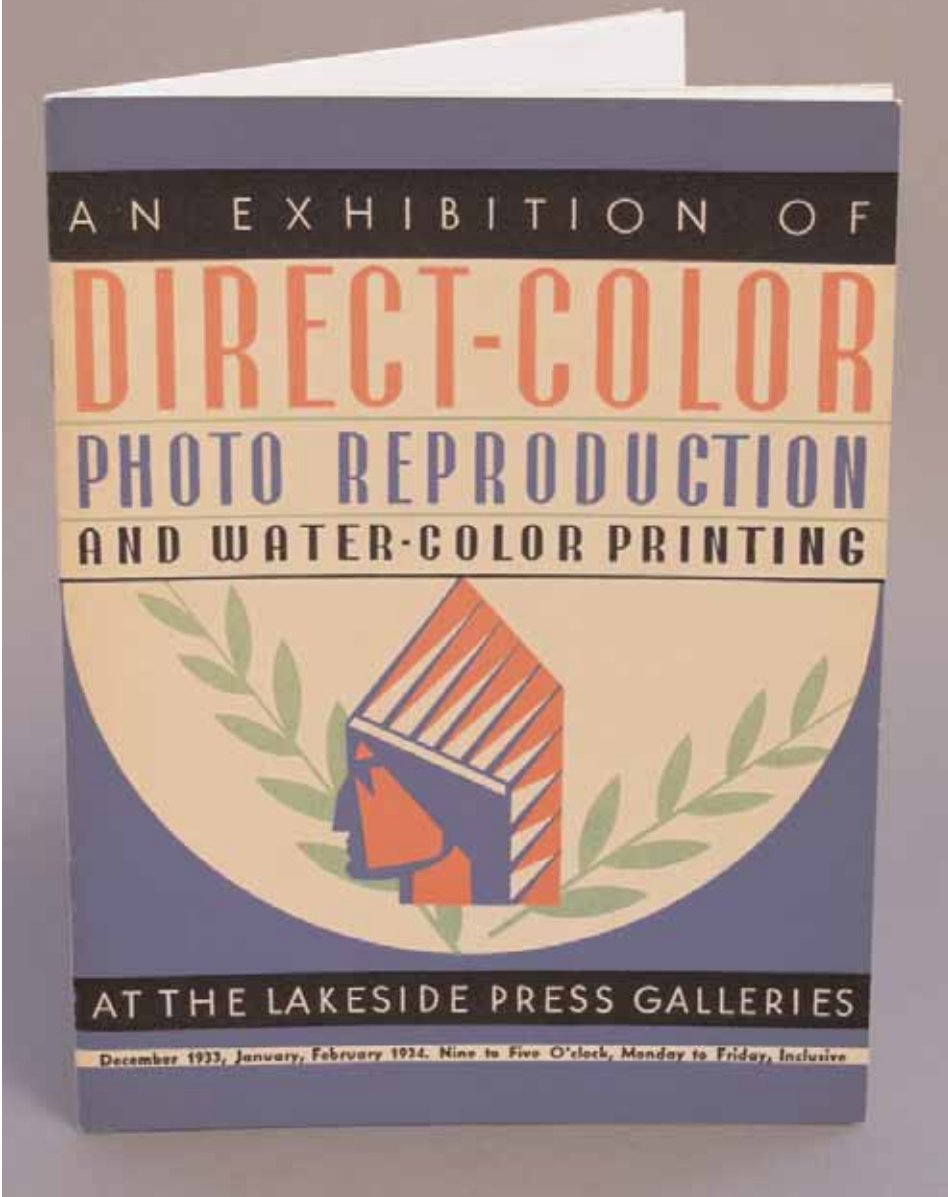
# The Lakeside Press Galleries

Among Donnelley's significant contributions to the cultural life of the city was the gallery, right, largely dedicated to the graphic arts. Pictured here is a small collection of ephemera from events held there.



Counter-clockwise, from top of this page: ♦The galleries were housed on the eighth floor of the Donnelley headquarters, in this room and additional smaller rooms on the sides. ♦“The Roman Letter” was held in 1952. ♦Announcement for a poster exhibit featured wood blocks by John Averill. ♦The AIGA show was held in the galleries for many years; this announcement is from 1939. ♦Czechoslovakian printing was featured in 1931, shortly after the gallery opened. ♦A 1955 exhibit made the case for photographers Gerlach, Hutchinson, Korling and Trobridge. ♦Occasional salesmanship occurred, as in this exhibit of printing techniques.





# The Caxton Club and R.R. Donnelley



Clockwise from upper left: ♦A small selection of Caxton books printed by Donnelley. ♦Current members Shawn, Tom, and Barbara Donnelley with Kim Coventry at the November 20005 University of Chicago opening. ♦Club announcements printed by Donnelley.



Richard Robert and Thomas Elliott (T. E.) Donnelley were elected to membership in the Caxton Club in 1895. Little did anyone know how fortuitous this connection would prove to be, for it was the beginning of Donnelley family mem-

bership in the club that has been sustained for five generations. It was also the start of the company's steadfast support of the club. For many years, the company and its employees ran the club as committee members and chairs.

T. E. served on the club's Council for eight years and for twelve years on the Publications Committee. During this time, his company designed, composed, and printed the first fourteen Club publications. In total, the company has printed, and in many cases designed, thirty-

six of the club's sixty-one major publications.

Gaylord Donnelley joined the Caxton Club in 1933. Following his father's example, he took an active role in the 1930s and 1940s, serving as secretary for three years, secretary-treasurer for four years, and Council member for a total of thirteen. During his years as secretary, the club's business was conducted from the company's offices. The company's graphic design and advertising departments and its presses and bindery were used extensively by the club, resulting not only in the above-mentioned books, but also in an impressive output of memorabilia such as invitations, pre-publication announcements, and keepsakes, as well as the club's directories. —K.C.

## NOTES TO DONNELLEY, from page 7

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This manuscript, twenty-two pages in length, appears to be a biography of R. R. Donnelley written by someone who knew him—possibly as a tribute to him during his lifetime.
- <sup>2</sup> The *Lakeside Monthly* (founded by H. V. Reed with editor Francis Fisher Browne in 1869 as the *Western Monthly*) was renamed the *Lakeside Monthly* in 1870 after the Lakeside Publishing and Printing Company, which printed the magazine and had served as publisher for a short

time. *Lakeside Monthly* was touted as the *Harper's* of the West and was the region's most important magazine for a number of years. Its pages were devoted to literary reviews, poetry, and critical essays. The publishers took the business of editing very seriously. According to one account, R. R. Donnelley sought the editorial services of Bret Harte, then an upcoming young author from California. Harte accepted the offer but resigned on arriving in Chicago, strangely because someone had failed to make arrangements for a carriage to meet him at the train station.

- <sup>3</sup> R.R. Donnelley remained printer of the Sears "Big Book" until 1993, when the retailer discon-

tinued its catalog service.

- <sup>4</sup> In 1979, the Training Library (as it was called) was given to the University of Chicago and the Newberry Library. The division was made by Robert Rosenthal, then curator of Special Collections at the University of Chicago, and James Wells, then custodian of the John M. Wing Collection at the Newberry Library. They made their choices based on the strengths and weaknesses of their respective collections. Some 1,700 volumes and more than a dozen Solander boxes of unbound materials went to the University of Chicago. Duplicate materials were sold at auction in 1980, and the proceeds were divided between the two libraries.

# Caxtonian Fellowships 2006-2007

## Book and Paper Artists

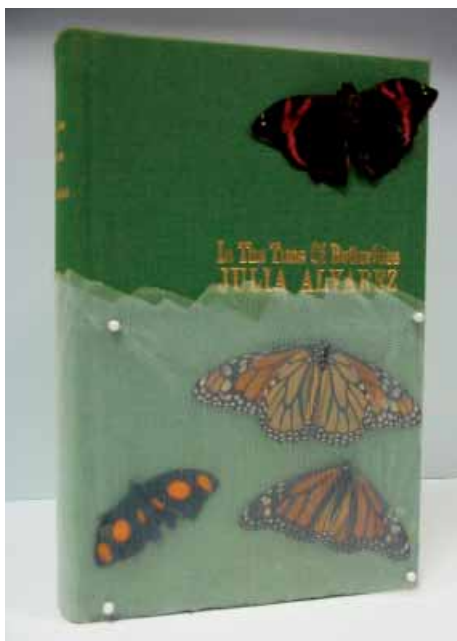
Wendy Husser

The winning applicants for our Caxton Fellowship awards for 2006-2007 attended the September dinner meeting and received their checks, displayed a sampling of their creative wares, and mingled with Caxtonians. Here we bring you a little background about how they worked their way to our dinner meeting, and present a few of the amazing pieces produced by our award winners.

**Jenny Kim**, who began her higher education in Cheltenham, England, in a program of off-campus study focusing on ceramics and printmaking (2000-2001), actually wanted to major in ceramics but it became too conceptual and was too tiring physically. That ended her dream of a career as a potter. She did, however, enjoy printmaking classes, but, again, believed that would be too intimidating as a major for her less-than-great drawing skills. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics and Printmaking from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The papermaking classes and then a bookbinding class finally began to bring it all together. After a few community classes at Columbia College, she applied to the graduate program in Book and Paper Interdisciplinary Arts, and expects her Master of Fine Arts from Columbia in May 2007.

Jenny has worked at Northwestern Library in the conservation lab repairing books from its general collection, was a summer artist-in-residence assistant at the Book and Paper Center at Columbia (producing an edition of eight flat books and drop spine boxes), an assistant in a letterpress studio, a gallery assistant, and a ceramics studio assistant. Her exhibitions include the Showcase Exhibition at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn (2005); a Book Arts show in Myopic Books (2005), an Installation Exhibition, "Liminal" at Columbia College (2004); and a graduating fine arts show for her degree from the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Mark Maroney** grew up in Massachu-



setts and after graduating from Brandeis with a B.A. in History and Sociology he joined the Peace Corps and worked as a volunteer in Benin, West Africa. During college he had spent time in Grenada, and then chose the Peace Corps because it allowed a short time commitment. In that short time commitment, however (Mark was in Benin for two years), he developed tree nursery and animal husbandry projects, wrote and received grants for three separate development projects, and estab-

Clockwise from top: ♦Jenny Kim, *Got Coffee* (book boards covered with hand made paper and coffee grounds). ♦Mark Moroney, *Bobo's Unwanted Legacy*. ♦Mark Moroney, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, entry to *One Book Many Interpretations at Chicago Public Library*. ♦Jenny Kim, *Look Around And...* (Van Dyke printing on hand made paper. Book board binding).

lished a library housing more than 300 books for the local school.

As it turned out, he met his wife, Debbi, originally from Oak Park, Illinois, in West Africa; they now live in Printer's Row with one year old Liam, and a sibling expected in May 2007.

Ultimately he wandered back to Chicago and earned his BA in Fine Arts in Visual Communications in June 2003. After this he did freelance designing for several groups and became a gallery assistant at the Center for Book and Paper Arts in 2005, removing and installing exhibits, maintaining and designing the website, and creating show announcements.

Mark expects his Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts/Book and Paper in Spring 2007.

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# Desert Island Desiderata

Dan Crawford

"What would you take to a desert island?..."

The practice started at least eighty years ago, and is probably older. It has been used in just about every medium of artistic expression: painting, literature, music, the cinema, and so forth. Perhaps it goes back to Robinson Crusoe, sitting alone in his hut (until he spotted that footprint, and ensured himself a place on numerous lists of this nature.)

You know the routine. If you were limited to ten CDs or 12 videocassettes, or five books, what would you pack? It's not really the same as a Ten Best Books List, because there are some really very excellent works of literature that you're perfectly happy to have read just the one time. This list asks what ten books you could most stand to read over and over and over.

But that's been done over and over and over. How many of us have considered the delicious alternative? If the person you like least in the whole of humanity were to be exiled to a desert island without any other forms of entertainment, what books would you send along?

This question brings a gleam to readers' eyes. They lick their lips as the brains start to concoct fiendish libraries. I figured the answers would make for a list of monumental significance, the consensus producing an infernal library of books only their authors could love.

Well, it didn't happen. In fact, only one book got more than one vote. The best I could do was pick out a few trends.

## I. Political-Economic Classics

One respondent immediately named *Mein Kampf* and followed it with *Das Kapital*, showing no prejudice toward right or left. Other people were happy to toss in *The Wealth of Nations*, or a couple of random years of *The Congressional Record*. There were numerous suggestions of "The Collected Speeches of [fill in your own political favorite here]." A number of best selling financial books from the past twenty years, which I will not dignify by putting their titles in the *Caxtonian*, were added,

and one jovial person suggested an entire run of Supreme Court Reports. But I said SINKING the island simply shortened the agony.

## II. Frustrating Volumes

"A Biblical Concordance with no Bible to go with it," suggested one helpful soul, and people were happy to add "an un-illustrated erotic novel in a language the person can't read," "a blank journal with no pen or pencil," and "a crossword puzzle book with every other page ripped out, so the clues for the odd-numbered puzzles face the squares for the even-numbered puzzles." Some people are awfully vindictive.

## III. Children's Literature

Most of these suggestions came from parents, and, when you sift through them, you come down to a basic theory. "Any book the person has had to read to a three-year-old more than seventy-five times."

## IV. Pop Culture

This became a little petty, a matter of mere prejudice against genre literature first: the suggestions of Danielle Steel and Grace Livingston Hill and Peggy Gaddis and Violet Winspear all came from people who would not touch a paperback romance; something similar occurs with those people who immediately volunteered Tom Clancy, Mickey Spillane, and Jack Woodford. Let's stick to books one has actually read, and not sniff at someone else's reading.

## V. Literature: Canon and Cannons

It is, naturally, among the great works that Caxtonians did themselves proud. I received suggestions of "anything by Joseph Heller that isn't *Catch-22*," *Tristram Shandy*, the complete works of William Faulkner, "anything by Frank Yerby," the poetry of William Cullen Bryant, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* ("Don't tell Paul Ruxin!"), Ezra Pound, *The Wasteland*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (THIS is the book that got three votes), *Moby-Dick*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Finnegan's Wake*, and *Tropic of Cancer*.

This is also the area that killed off the article I intended to write. Not only did I lose interest when one of my favorite books

made the list, but I considered myself lucky to escape with all my limbs intact.

"Faulkner!" cried one Caxtonian. "He's a Nobel winner!"

"So what? So was Bjornstjerne Bjornson." "I'd rather read anything by Bjornson than all that Dreiser you've got."

"Dreiser could out-write Faulkner with a paper bag on his head and his right hand tied behind his back!"

"I wish he had. The books would be shorter, anyhow."

"Yeah, well, YOU still read MacKinlay Kantor!"

"You read Allen Drury!"

"You liked *And the Ladies of the Club*!"

"YOU read haiku!"

"Put *Andersonville* on the list! And *Spirit Lake*!"

"Put all Japanese poetry on the list!"

This sort of scene occurred again and again, until I wished I were the one on a desert island. I hereby relinquish my title as Infernal Librarian to whomsoever wants to mediate these discussions. There is no consensus to be found. Every work of literature ever produced is as unreadable to somebody as it is adored by somebody else.

In fact, if the Samuel Richardson Fan Club reads this, please don't write to me. I apologize for even mentioning him in this context. *Pamela* is a landmark of literature, a rare and polished gem from the mines of the artistic mind, and highly suitable for a PBS miniseries. I, um, just wouldn't put it in my suitcase if I were going on an ocean voyage, that's all. Wouldn't, um, want it to get wet.

Dan Crawford has no intention of going to a desert island, at least without Ginger and Mary Ann. He enjoyed *Tristram Shandy* so much that he immediately started it again and read it a second time. So there.

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## John McKinven

John McKinven '86 died on December 10. A remembrance will appear in a future issue.

# CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

Wynken de Worde

Happiness, success, wealth, love, and happiness to all in the new year of 2007.

If you have or want some of those things, or want some guidance from a *bon vivant* who has been there, then contact a remarkable Caxtonian, who was introduced to Pablo Picasso while visiting Paris in 1939. Able to give personal suggestions not only for Paris, but also Venice, London, Los Angeles, New York, Israel, and, of course, Chicago, **Ray Epstein** ('63) welcomes visitors to his personal website for "Ray's Choices in Dining and Travel." "This is an ego trip in which I'll share with you 60 years of very good living!" See [www.rayepstein.com](http://www.rayepstein.com).

Some lucky Caxtonians found in their mail boxes the 104th annual volume of *The Lakeside Classics*, from R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. No copies are sold by The Lakeside Press. They are gifts for employees, to persons with a business relationship with the company, and to fortunate "friends." At least in 1906 the "friends" of the press included all Caxtonians. **Thomas E. Donnelly** (1895) was the innovator of this series begun in 1903, and which is the longest-lived series of annual gift volumes in recorded human history. Donnelly's presentation letter hoped that "this modest gift to the members of the Caxton Club may in a small way support membership." I am sure that little did he anticipate that the rare copies of that 1906 volume, William Penn's *Fruits of Solitude*, could fetch a thousand dollars a century later. Check your shelves for the thin green volume!

**Susan Rossen** ('82), who directs the publishing arm of The Art Institute, came by her artistic background quite honestly—she grew up surrounded by it. Susan's father, Joseph Freibert, a Milwaukee artist, has been posthumously honored with an exhibition of his work at the Corbett vs. Dempsey Gallery, 1120 N. Ashland Ave. just south of Division St. The show closes January 6, 2007.

What really constitutes a library? And which really was the first? Inquiring minds want to know.

"Illinois's first public library was founded



Caxtonians enjoy the exhibit and each other at the Donnelley opening at the University of Chicago on November first.

in Albion in 1818." —[www.worldalmanacforkids.com](http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com)

"The Warren County Library opened as a reading room in 1868. In 1870, William P. Pressly donated funds for a building—the first public library in Illinois." — "Warren County, Illinois, USA" on [www.outfitters.com](http://www.outfitters.com)

"*Rock Island, IL*: Rock Islanders have always been justly proud of their public library, which was the first in the state of Illinois to open to the public on Nov. 25, 1872. Now a national publisher has recognized it as well. The Rock Island Public Library has won a coveted spot in *Heart of the Community: The Libraries We Love*, the first book to sing the praises and show the beauty of America's beloved public libraries." —Rock Island Library web site, [www.rbls.lib.il.us/rip/](http://www.rbls.lib.il.us/rip/)

Wynken has long felt that the history of The Caxton Club is more interesting than fiction, and ought to be highlighted more often, such as **Dan Crawford** ('95) did not long ago at a Friday Luncheon. I do not recall if Dan mentioned **Hikomichi Shugio** (1895), a charter member of TCC. Shugio was a Tokyo bibliophile who was, for example, a patron of the great exhibition commemorating the Japanese painter, Ichiryusai-Hiroshige. He was a commis-

sioner for Japan's exhibition for the 1903 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. And not least, he apparently met **Frank Lloyd Wright** (1907) when FLW designed the second Imperial Hotel at Tokyo. Clearly Shugio was a distinguished non-resident member.

Future historians may also note a book edited, partly re-written, and produced by **Wendy Husser** ('99), with the brilliant design of another Caxton member, **Matt Doherty** ('98), *The American Urological Association Centennial History* (2002). And did you know that if J. M. Barrie did not invent the name 'Wendy' for his character in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, then certainly he was the one who popularized it. Our Wendy (named from Peter Pan) edits our TCC website, [www.caxtonclub.org](http://www.caxtonclub.org), but she may occasionally visit the all-Wendys, all-the-time website at [www.wendy.com/wendyweb/history.html](http://www.wendy.com/wendyweb/history.html). We may call upon Wendy to help edit [wynkendeworde.com](http://wynkendeworde.com), but that website so far is only a figment of the imagination; however, you can now email comments or suggestions or notes to Wynken at [wynkendeworde@comcast.net](mailto:wynkendeworde@comcast.net).

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# Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by John Blew

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

“Chicago, That Toddlin’ Town: The History of Transportation in the City” (books, photographs and maps from the founding of the City to the early 20th century which document the central role played by all modes of transportation in Chicago’s growth and its importance as a great urban center) at the Main Library, Northwestern University, 1790 Campus Drive, Evanston 847-491-3636 (closes February 2007)

“Printing for the Modern Age: Commerce, Craft, and Culture in the R.R. Donnelley Archive” (historical materials from the R.R. Donnelley corporate archive which was presented as a gift to the University of Chicago in 2005) at the Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-8705 (closes 12 February 2007)

“The Aztecs and the Making of Colonial Mexico” (illustrated books, maps and manuscripts from the Library’s Edward E. Ayer Americana collection which document the significant contributions made by the Colonial Aztecs (Nahua) to the culture and heritage of Colonial Mexico over a 300-year period following the Spanish conquest) and the associated exhibit “The Reconstruction of Mexico—Tenochtitlan,” both at the Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago 312-255-3700 (close 13 January 2007)

“Following the Twins Through History” (rare books, works on paper and instruments from antiquity to the current period which depict the constellation Gemini: the Twins; this constellation imbeds the bright stars Castor and Pollux in the images of twin boys); this is a sequel, exhibiting additional materials, to



Toddlin’ Town at Northwestern  
UNDERGROUND TUNNELS UNDER THE CITY

a similarly titled show at the Adler during the summer of 2006; at the Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum, 1300 South Lake Shore Drive (the Museum Campus), Chicago 312-322-0300 (closes 4 March 2007)

“In Search of Watty Piper: A Brief History of the ‘Little Engine’ Story” (a small exhibit on the famous children’s book *The Little Engine That Could*, whose origins are clouded in mystery and controversy) at the Richard J. Daley Library (1st Floor Lobby Case), University of Illinois at Chicago, 801 South Morgan, Chicago 312-996-2742 (closes 15 January 2007)

“One Book, Many Interpretations” (to commemorate the five-year anniversary of *One Book, One Chicago*, an exhibition of artistic bindings done by fine binders and book artists from around the

world which interpret the ten *One Book, One Chicago* selections through the art of binding) in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor, Harold Washington Library Center of the Chicago Public Library, 400 South State Street, Chicago 312-747-4300 (closes 15 April 2007)

“Solon S. Beman Architecture in Illinois” (an exhibition of contemporary and archival photographs and other materials of some of the more than 1000 buildings designed by Beman, many of which—including buildings in Pullman—are located in northern Illinois) at the Pullman State

Historic Site, Hotel Florence, 11111 S. Forrestville Avenue, Chicago 773-660-2341 (closes Spring 2007)

“Autumn Bright, Winter’s Delight” (an exhibition of books and images from the Library’s collection about woodland plants found at the Arboretum) at the Sterling Morton Library, The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, IL 630-968-0074 (closes 31 January 2007)

Members who have information about current or forthcoming exhibitions that might be of interest to Caxtonians, please call or e-mail John Blew (312-807-4317, e-mail: [jblew@bellboyd.com](mailto:jblew@bellboyd.com)).

## Club Notes

### Membership Report, November 2006

1. I am pleased to report the election to membership of the following individuals:

**Chris Cook**, a Dante collector and the chief rare book and MS cataloger at The Rare Book & Manuscript Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is assistant editor for the Rare Book and Manuscript Section Newsletter of the American Library Association and a charter member of the Soy Bean Press. In fall, 2006, he curated the Dante at Urbana

exhibition at UIUC. Nominated by Valerie Hotchkiss, seconded by Don Krummel.

**Joanne Silver**, a graduate of Dominican University, has a deep love of libraries and library research. This has led her to service as a researcher for the Encyclopedia Britannica and as a resource person for the encyclopedia’s Great Books Program. In the early days of the Internet, she served as an on-line information source for Prodigy. She currently volunteers at the Health Learning Center at the Northwestern University library, is a season ticket holder at the Lyric Opera and Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and is a member of the Fine Arts Club. She was nominated by JoAnn Baumgartner and seconded by Evelyn Lampe.

2. I am pleased to report that the Club is beginning to receive expressions of interest from individuals well below our normal age demographic. If you know of young collectors, librarians, and others interested in the books and book arts, please let me know. I’ll be happy to send them a sample copy of the Caxtonian and let them know of forthcoming meetings. (Be assured, however, that we continue to welcome more seasoned membership candidates!) Don’t hesitate to call or email me with any questions regarding membership.

Dan “Skip” Landt  
773-604-4115, [skiplandt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:skiplandt@sbcglobal.net)

# Caxtonians Collect: Robin LaCombe Secco

Twenty-sixth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Robin LaCombe Secco joined the Caxton Club in 2005, nominated by Kathryn DeGraff. She was the first person, and so far, the only person, to join as a junior member. As she recalls it, she attended seven or eight meetings before joining.

When I called to suggest I interview her, she protested that she didn't have a collection yet. "I know what I'd like to collect, but I haven't had the time or the funds to get started," she said. I reassured her that the members would be interested, nonetheless.

Secco came to Chicago with her husband (then of 1 month duration) eight and a half years ago. They met at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and he was set to attend Northwestern Law School and she to work on a masters in English literature at DePaul. (Her husband, Nicholas, has since become an attorney at Kirkland and Ellis.) Early on, she got a job working in the library with Kathryn DeGraff in special collections. That was where the bug bit. "I had figured I'd go on and get a PhD in English literature. But working with the books in special collections changed my whole perspective. If you study literature you're only learning a single author's view of a time period. But if you can manage to locate the ephemera of an era you get a much more complete picture of life. It's more challenging, but also more interesting than studying authors."

She has moved on to a cataloging job elsewhere in the DePaul library, but her heart remains in special collections. With that as the lure, she has embarked upon and nearly completed a second masters, this time in Library Science. She said the University of Illinois, and I said I didn't know that the University of Illinois at Chicago had a library program. "No, it's the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," she explained. "They have what is called the LEEP program, where much of the course work can be completed through online class meetings." She has supplemented her online work with courses elsewhere: she attended Rare Book School on the Prairie this past summer, taking two courses from Sid



Berger. And she recently applied to Rare Book School at the University of Virginia for a scholarship. "There were a hundred applicants, and I got one of 40 given!" she exclaimed. The scholarship covers her tuition for one course, but the student has to cover his or her own transportation and lodging. She is hoping to be able to take a class in descriptive bibliography.

She's already begun her job search, even though she doesn't graduate until June. "Special collections is a hard area of librarianship to enter," she explained. "Most major libraries have a special collection, and one head for the department. But very few have funds for professional assistants in special collections, so it's hard to find an entry-level job in the area."

What will she collect when she's able to start her own collection? "I'd like to have a complete run of *Punch* and of the *Illustrated London News* to start with," she answers without hesitation. This derives from her main interest in English literature: the nineteenth-century Victorian period. "It's a very interesting period, with unique parallels to our own. Industrial manufacturing was becoming the central economic activity, but some people were still attached to the cottage life of earlier times. Seemingly the more people lived with manufactured objects, the more they came to

exalt craftsmanship."

She believes it may take a while to assemble her magazine collection, but has faith that it can be accomplished. "At DePaul, when I was in Special Collections, I often had to shop for items to complete our runs of a periodical, or to replace a piece which it wasn't feasible to repair. And I could almost always find what I was looking for, generally on the internet or in book dealers' catalogs. Today, I most frequently look at bookfinder.com."

At first she's stumped by the question of what she'd take to a desert island. But then the answer comes to her. "*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. It's my favorite novel. And also *Jane Eyre*. I've read it at several poignant points in my life, and it seems to have a different meaning for me each time."

It's been a long road from her childhood in a small southern Louisiana town, where there was but one—used—bookstore. "Acadiana was full of unique Cajun culture, but like many pastoral areas, it lacked some of the cosmopolitan opportunity afforded by a larger city," Secco says. "I really love it in Chicago, with the huge array of specialty bookstores and literary activities."

The Caxton Club strikes her as one of those wonderful opportunities.

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# Bookmarks...

## Luncheon Program

January 12, 2007

John Blew

“Making Collectible Americana Accessible:

*U.S. Iana* and Wright Howes”

Caxtonian John Blew will speak about the fascinating creation and tremendous (and continuing) influence of a book, published by the Newberry Library in 1962. *U.S. Iana* is an annotated bibliography, (11,620 entries), of collectible Americana compiled by Wright Howes, a Chicago-based rare book dealer, long considered the “dean” of dealers in antiquarian Americana. Howes’ Herculean effort represents the distillation of his (over) 50 years in the rare book trade and remains (for 45 years) the “bible” for dealers and collectors. Included in the talk will be the story of the very unique collaboration between Howes and Everett Graff, then President of the Newberry Library.

Besides being a Caxton Council member and partner in the law firm of Bell, Boyd and Lloyd, John is a board member of many civic organizations including Legal Assistance, the Court Theater, the Architectural Historians’ Society and he is deeply involved with the University of Chicago Library.

Mark your calendars NOW.

## Dinner Program

January 17, 2007

John Crichton

“Whither the Antiquarian Bookseller

in the Twenty-first century?”

January: John Crichton is the owner of The Brick Row Book Shop in San Francisco. He is a graduate of Kansas University, and began in the book business with Peter Howard at Serendipity Books in Berkeley, California, in 1979. He is the immediate past President of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America, and has served as chair of its security and ethics committees, and has also served as President of The Book Club of California, and on the boards of the San Francisco Center for the Book, the Associates of the Stanford University Libraries, and as a representative to FABS. John’s work in tracking down a forger has been written about in Nancy and Lawrence Goldstone’s *Warmly Inscribed: The New England Forger and Other Book Tales*, and he has spoken before many bibliophilic groups, including FABS, The Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of Japan, and the Colorado Seminars at the Antiquarian Book Market. There are few dealers as scholarly and as practical as John, and almost none his peer as raconteur.

## Beyond January...

### FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

Teacher, scholar, writer, political gadfly and philosopher George Anastaplo will speak February 9 about his latest book, *Simply Unbelievable: A Conversation With a Holocaust Survivor*, the incredible story of U of I and MIT math professor Simcha Brudno.

### FEBRUARY DINNER

Geoffrey D. Smith of Ohio State University will talk February 21 on “The American Puritan Library,” and how the ideas found in the books of those early Americans influenced the New England Renaissance two centuries later.

### MARCH LUNCHEON

March 9; speaker to be announced.

### MARCH DINNER

Gary Johnson, President of The Chicago History Museum, will speak March 21 on “Author! Author! : Assessing the Impact of a Research Collection.” This former lawyer has returned to his first love, history.

## Looking ahead to the 2007 Caxton/Newberry Symposium on the Book...

The event will be held Saturday, March 31, at the Newberry Library in the morning and the Alliance Française in the afternoon. The topic will be “Remodeling the Tower of Babel: The Translator’s Role in a Shrinking World.” Speakers include Patricia Clare Ingam, of Indiana University;

Thomas Hahn of the University of Rochester; Göran Malmqvist of the Swedish Academy; and Douglas Hofstadter of Indiana University. The morning will be devoted to talks by each speaker; in the afternoon, all will join in a panel discussion moderated by Diana Robin of the Newberry.

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of Chase Tower, Madison and Clark, Chicago. Luncheon: buffet opens at 11:30; program 12:30-1:30. Dinner meetings: spirits at 5 pm, dinner at 6 pm, lecture at 7:30 pm. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email

[caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org). Members and guests: Lunch \$25, Dinner \$45. Discount parking available for evening meetings, with a stamped ticket, at Standard Self-Park, 172 W. Madison. Call Steve Masello at 847-905-2247 if you need a ride or can offer one.